



# NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture  
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## USDA Gathers Data About Farm Labor

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS – March 15, 2021 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will conduct its biannual Agricultural Labor Survey during the second half of April. The survey will collect information about hired labor from more than 1400 Illinois farmers and ranchers.

"The beginning of the year is the time when agricultural producers plan out the rest of their growing seasons and it is a great time to assess on-farm labor needs," said Mark Schleusener, NASS Illinois Statistician. "The data that farmers provide through NASS's Agricultural Labor Survey allow federal policymakers to base farm labor policies on accurate information."

USDA and the U.S. Department of Labor use statistics gathered in the Agricultural Labor Survey to establish minimum wage rates for agricultural workers, administer farm labor recruitment and placement service programs, and assist legislators in determining labor policies.

In the survey, NASS asks participants to answer a variety of questions about hired farm labor on their operations, including total number of hired farm workers, the total hours worked, and total base and gross wages paid for the weeks of January 10-16 and April 11-17. Survey participants can respond online at [agcounts.usda.gov](https://agcounts.usda.gov) or by mail.

"By asking about two separate time periods each time we collect data during the year, we are able to publish quarterly data and capture seasonal variation," said Schleusener. "This approach reduces the number of times we survey farm businesses while ensuring that accurate and timely data are available."

NASS will compile, analyze, and publish survey results in the May 26 *Farm Labor* report. All previous *Farm Labor* publications are available online at <https://usda.library.cornell.edu/concern/publications/x920fw89s>. For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS Heartland Regional Office at (800) 551-1014.

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*NASS is the federal statistical agency responsible for producing official data about U.S. agriculture and is committed to providing timely, accurate and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture.*

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| Average Yearly Wage Rates 2020 (\$/hr) |            |             |
|--|------------|-------------|
|  | Cornbelt I | Cornbelt II |
|  | IL, IN, OH | IA, MO      |
| All Farm Labor                         | 15.99      | 15.94       |
| Ag Equipment Operators                 | 16.38      | 15.84       |
| Animal Workers                         | 14.57      | 15.20       |
| Crop & Animal Workers                  | 15.31      | 15.37       |
| Crop Workers                           | 15.61      | 15.54       |
| Packers & Packagers                    | 14.72      | (S)         |

(S) Insufficient number of reports to establish an estimate.